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Local Government Respond to COVID-19 Pandemics: A Study of South Tangerang City

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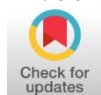
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Abstract: This study aims to analyze local governments' efforts in promoting and implementing policies issued during COVID-19. It can also be seen what instruments are used by the government in the socialization of the policy, and the communication between local government officials and the media, society, and business can be seen. The method used in this research is descriptive with a qualitative approach to see the stages of communication in their role in socializing the Tangerang City Government's policies. The results showed that a policy's socialization had gone very well through various socialization of communications such as online media, print media, and electronic media. This type of socialization media is the main instrument of the Tangerang local government in disseminating policies. Another type of socialization is direct media or outreach to each village. It is recommended that the Tangerang City Government improve its performance in disseminating policies to achieve the resulting policy objectives to build public order towards the policies taken.

Keyword: *Local Government; Government Respond; covid-19; Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to analyze the pattern of government collaboration in conveying information and disseminating policies published during the COVID-19 pandemic; the focus of this research is carried out in the Tangerang district because this area is one of the areas that have a high rate of active cases in the Banten Province ([Arief, 2020](#)). Before entering Indonesia, Covid-19 was an outbreak of the Coronavirus, which initially attacked Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019. This virus will develop and become a pandemic that spreads rapidly throughout the world. On March 18, 2020, the number of Covid-9 sufferers reached 194,909 with a mortality rate of 7,876. This figure is mainly found in China with 3,242 and Italy with 2,505 ([Vardavas & Nikitara, 2020](#)). Based on data until March 2020, in the first three months of 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak reached 719,000 and out of 33,673 sufferers died. The spread during this period touched 202 countries ([Iqbal, 2020](#)).

A significant case of the COVID 19 outbreak began in March 2020 in Indonesia. The outbreak was exacerbated because 156 of the 1,528 infected people died in the first wave. With a death rate of 8.9%, COVID-19 has spread to most Indonesian provinces ([Suryahadi, Al Izzati, & Suryadarma, 2020](#)). Around 94% of provinces are confirmed to have contracted COVID-19, of which DKI Jakarta is one of the provinces with the highest confirmed cases (48% of total cases) ([Firmansyah, 2020](#)).

Besides, in the areas of Tangerang, Tangerang, and Bogor, on March 24 - April 3, 2020, it was found that 31% of the community stated that this action had taken place. The government has taken in dealing with Covid-19 in the fast category, 39% of them said the action was moderate, 24% said it was slow, and 6% thought it was speedy ([Suyadi, 2020](#)). This percentage shows that the government still needs to take other strategic actions in dealing with this virus. The 6% and 31% who gave 'speedy' and 'fast' responses have not yet positively impacted the wider community ([Kurnianto, 2020](#)). Therefore, there is a need for movement between government, society and the private sector. The mobilization of the community's potential has become prominent to overcome Covid-19.

Although concerns about such a pandemic have increased, government preparedness for the current public health crisis is often haphazard and largely inadequate in large part due to confusion, instability, misinformation and poor planning, which have led to severe errors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic ([Kimura, Thangavelu, Narjoko, & Findlay, 2020](#)). This mistake also impacts public trust in the government because it cannot control and overcome COVID-19 ([Chiu et al., 2020](#)), so that the government needs readiness and coordination with other actors in conveying information, especially any policies to be issued ([Cahyono, 2020](#)).

Uncooperative and poorly organized government coordination and response initiatives by these interdependent organizations have led to politically charged contrasting views and responses between federal and state government officials on the pandemic ([Miller, Colvin, & Seperville, 2020](#)). Such conflicts within government agencies are key factors that often trigger social unrest, increased social hostilities between public sectors with different policy directions, inadequate efforts to reduce health risks, and the prevention of adverse health outcomes (illness, suffering, and death) crises COVID-19 ([Bonaccorsi et al., 2020](#)). The critical role of government to unify and motivate public groups is crucial to promoting health risk prevention, response and recovery from severe damage during national emergencies ([Chen, Huang, & Li, 2020](#)) ([Javed & Tučková, 2020](#)). Both statutory regulations and ministerial regulations related to the dissemination of regional regulations have not been stated in detail about effective socialization methods of regional regulations and the feedback from the process of that socialization. Hence, they can reach all elements of society. This is very influential towards the widespread regional regulations at the provincial level, especially in the districts. Thus, the government in the regions should automatically seek their strategy to socialize their local regulations with different activities and implementation processes ([Janti, Martono, & Subejo, 2016](#)).

Furthermore, from the stages of public policy dissemination above, to measure the success of policy socialization, it is seen from the following indicators ([Nye, 1977](#)): First, the preparatory stage is preparing policies that have been designed to be implemented, this is done based on the report. Problems, events or direct observation from the government. Second, the action stage, namely carrying out the implementation of the policies that have been set, is done in the form of a response or real action on the report of a problem so that in the future, the problem can be resolved.

As political authority rises during national public health crises, efficient government coordination is becoming increasingly necessary for fighting pandemics and stabilizing society ([Hsiang et al., 2020](#)). Effective government outreach plays a vital role in reminding key civic stakeholders (including first responders, at-risk populations, health care providers/health authorities, media representatives, law enforcement agencies and the general public) about imminent risks and best practices to mitigate damage during crises. This includes internal government contact inside and between government departments and external communication

with the public, the media and other organizations, and members of other countries that share common health risks. Owing to these diverse groups and organizations' interconnectedness, government contact must be highly efficient and well organized to offer the possible intelligence and guidance to better handle pandemics ([Purnomo, Fathani, Setiawan, Fadhlurrohman, & Nugroho, 2021](#)). Mass communication is used on social media Twitter as an exhibit works, on a personal page, each user can indicate the identity that government wants to convey through social media ([Ulfa, Purnomo, & Kasiwi, 2020](#)). So, Twitter can be seen as a media platform that could increase individual productivity and creativity and work as motivation ([Malawani, Nurmandi, Purnomo, & Rahman, 2020](#)).

Twitter is one of the social media platforms that has been known to be used by a government agency, a study by [Goranson & Kastriha \(2019\)](#), provides an example that social media is considered an indication of such an entrepreneur's capability to implement good governance and information utilization. Along with that, [Kusumasari & Alam \(2012\)](#) describe that social media accounts have proven to give mutual benefit for both government and the community. Government accounts, in particular, social media platforms, help the community deliberate their thoughts, opinions, and needs. However, [Needham & Smith \(2015\)](#), describes that social media is needed to develop both urban and rural sectors. Most municipalities in Indonesia have widely used social media usage in urban and rural sectors as campaign tools. By using social media government able to gather people's attention towards the event. Therefore, it is hard to identify the information eligibility in social media, especially on Twitter. The information mainly spread is bias with the account's ownership interest. Despite that, hard to found the government's effectiveness of social media usage. Referring to the previous studies, it can be understood that social media usage has widely used by not only an individual but also the government institutions. The previous studies have deliberately explained the effectiveness of social media usage as communication tools. Not only explicit to the urban areas but also into rural or regionals areas. As what has been implemented in Tangerang Municipals in Indonesia. The government in Tangerang joined Twitter in February 2012. This study will analyze the Tangerang government's collaboration in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic through its Twitter account (@Kota_Tangerang).

The @Kota_Tangerang Twitter account has approximately 42.400 followers, which belongs to individuals, private sectors, and other government departments. During the pandemic, this account has 1002 tweets. The environmental changes have made a shift in social media usage. Before the pandemic, the @Kota_Tangerang Twitter account used communication tools only between the government and the public. Yet, during the pandemic, the communication expected to expand also happens among the government's entities and other stakeholders. This research tries to answer the effectiveness of the @Kota_Tangerang Twitter account as a communication tool for the government, and also will analyze claims that effective government communication plays a crucial role in responding to the pandemic successfully through social media platforms. The more complicated the pandemic is, the more attention needs to be paid to effective government communication. There is ample evidence from the last few decades that many local, national, and international government agencies have made public severe communication mistakes in response to complex public health emergencies, spreading inconsistent, untrue, and contradictory messages ([Wagner, Baccarella, & Voigt, 2017](#); [Widianti, Pawito, & Hastjarjo, 2019](#)).

RESEARCH METHOD

This article tried to used qualitative research method approaches ([Creswell, 2015](#)) noted that this method allows the researcher to explore and better understand a phenomenon, it is used

to study one or more cases within a bounded setting or context, moreover, in [\(Rahman, 2016\)](#) using qualitative research can also testing language and other previous research studies, therefore, as to achieve deeper insights about designing, managing and interpreting and easy to understand. Besides, the qualitative and the interpretation of the results of regret analysis [\(Aspers & Corte, 2019\)](#). Moreover, using qualitative research to understand the human interaction context in a particular situation is based on the research's perspective. Therefore, from the researcher's perspective, the researcher should utilize the pernicious research finding to further explanatory such as confirmation and criticizes the previous research finding.

This study aims to determine collaboration in disseminating policies during the COVID-19 pandemic in Tangerang. This research method uses descriptive qualitative method, where in analyzing the data is described in descriptive form. According to qualitative descriptive research is a study that seeks to describe an event on the object of research that is analyzed so as to produce a solution to a problem [\(Sulastri, Purnomo, Setiawan, Fathani, & Oktawan, 2020\)](#). This study's type of data uses secondary data obtained and collected from the @kota_tangerang Twitter activity (April 2020-September 2020) and Local online media, magazine and others. This activity is identified in detail and in-depth according to the research variable indicators. Besides, data is also supported by local online news related to government activities in disseminating policies published during the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the Tangerang area. The data is processed and analyzed using the Nvivo 12 plus application so that research results can be obtained to determine the extent of collaboration in disseminating policies related to COVID-19 in Tangerang. The use of Nvivo 12Plus in this study is because the software can analyze more deeply and carefully and visualize the research results maximally to readily be understood by readers.

RESULT AND DICUSSION

In order to handle the outbreak of Covid-19, strong collaboration between society and government is needed. The government who possesses the power should be able to mobilize the society to actively participate in preventing the spread of Covid-19. Several initial steps have been conducted by the government, including; (1) a call for caution, (2) health protocol implementation including 'Germas' (Healthy Living Community Movement), (3) social distancing, (4) disinfectant spraying, (5) the adequacy of medical devices and health facilities, (6) stay at home or work from home to geofence options such as regional partially closed down and or lockdown [\(Firmansyah, 2020\)](#).

The Indonesian government attempted to take several quick actions, including: (1) issuing preparedness guidelines through the Indonesian Ministry of Health on January 28th, 2020; (2) informing the ways of preventing Covid-19 on January 21st, 2020 through the Indonesian Ministry of Health's communication and community service bureau; and (3) carrying out the actions of returning Indonesian citizens in three stages. By evacuating a total of 238 Indonesian citizens in the Chinese province of Hubei. In addition, to the 188 Indonesian citizens on the crew of the world dream-ship in Hong Kong on February 26, 2020, and 68 citizens on the crew of Diamond Princess on March 1, 2021, (4) the government was also quick in releasing the President of the Republic of Indonesia's instruction. On June 17, 2019, the President issued Presidential Instruction No. 4/2019 regarding the enhancement of the ability to prevent, detect, and respond to epidemics of disease, global pandemics, and the urgency of biology and nuclear chemicals. The president did the coordination in relation to policy determination, funding, people development, non-natural disasters, and collaboration through that instruction. This policy was designed to be implemented

response from the community, and the community has also participated in disseminating these tweets. Also, in the Twitter activity of the city government of Tangerang @kota_tangerang, it is very routine in tweeting 50-80 tweets every month; this is done according to its use, namely to disseminate policies, regulations, provisions to overcome the spread of COVID-19 in the region Tangerang City (Figure 2).

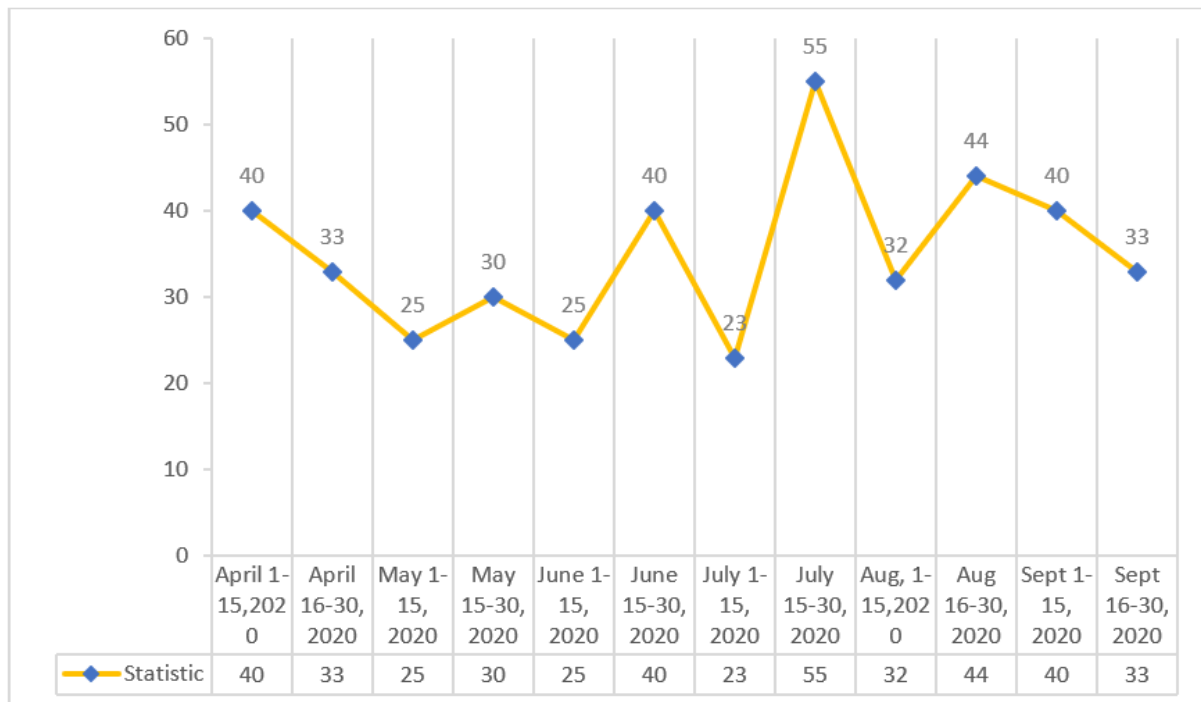


Figure 2. Tweet Statistic @kota_tangerang

Also, we also analyzed the level of response from the public to the government, governments and business governments to the tweets submitted by government accounts on their official Twitter page, the results of this analysis describe how much response from the public, government agencies, and businesses in response to Twitter tweets @kota_tangerang (Figure 3)

Figure 3. describes that every tweet submitted by the government through its account, namely @kota_tangerang, received various responses from the community, other local governments, and businesses. We responded that the weather was very diverse and dominated by the community, followed by the government and business. In the six months of Twitter activity, the highest response from the government was in April and September 2020 with the dominant issue of COVID-19 in the city of Tangerang, the impact of COVID-19 in Tangerang and efforts to anticipate COVID-19 in the Tangerang area, then in September 2020 the dominant issue was the socialization of plans for the use of vaccines, national and regional economic recovery and recovery of leading sectors, one of which is tourism. Besides, the dominant response from the community in June 2020 was with issues of national policies such as PSBB, the impact of PSBB and restrictions on mass transportation, and the dominant response from businesses in June 2020 with the issue of the impact of COVID-19 on the regional economy, national losses and local, economic crisis, poverty and employment. The magnitude of the Twitter activity response indicates that the local government, namely the city of Tangerang, is trying to make direct interactions with the community through social media such as Twitter in conveying information and receiving reports and input regarding steps. Steps to be taken in the future.

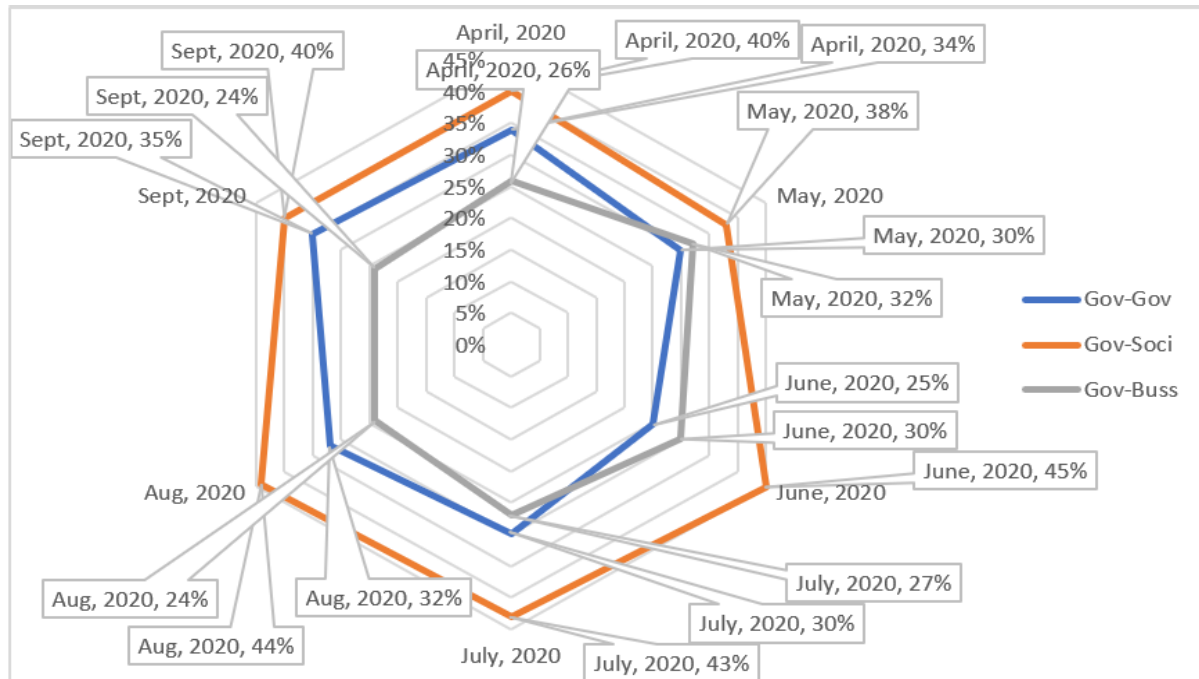


Figure 3. Intensity Response of Government's Twitter Account @kota_tangerang

Then, we also carried out an analysis when implementing the policies that had been determined; the result was that the public was not satisfied with the government's performance, even though, in reality, the government had made an appeal for policies, socialization programs about COVID-19 and how to prevent it by 98% 2% for the socialization of disinfectant spraying. However, this policy has become less than optimal regardless of the community's needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The public expects quick action by providing massive tests or distributing masks and hand sanitizers. The government is required to act and help fulfill the need for masks, disinfectants, and hand sanitizers because prices are no longer affordable. Also, there is no strong cooperation between the government and the community. Each of them moved for their interests and goals. The community tries to meet their needs without any government intervention, especially to prepare for panic buying conditions. On the other hand, the public doesn't care about the Covid-19 virus. They still consider Covid-19 as a common epidemic that can be handled quickly. Lack of literacy and public understanding about Covid-19 causes a lack of care in society.

Figure 4. is the result of our analysis which shows the role of print media and local online media in presenting information that directly helps the government in disseminating policies issued to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The picture describes that first: these media are consistent in conveying information related to COVID-19, which consists of the dangers of COVID-19, the impact of COVID-19, the number of local and national patients and conveying fatality rate information. Second, all media gradually try to convey information related to national and local policies. This is done to convey a sense of confidence to the public from interested actors, namely the government, academics and business actors, that COVID-19 can be resolved immediately, even though there are many challenges in making policies.

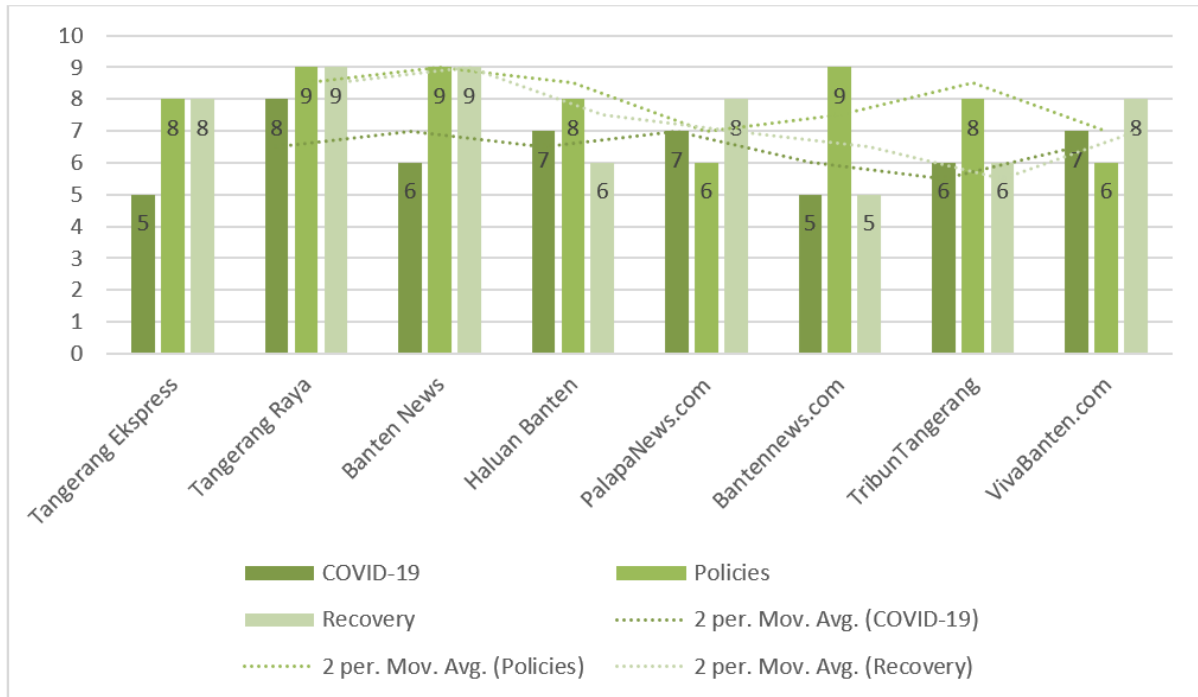


Figure 4. Local Media's Activities

In line with this, the online media and print media in the Tangerang area also often convey information related to the government's efforts, health workers, academics, and businesses to carry out gradual recoveries, first to restore trust in the community through statements. That the government and other actors can control COVID-19, convey information on local and national economic recovery, convey innovations that all groups will carry out. This aims to provide a sense of security, trust, and concern for the community for mental recovery, self-confidence, and others to carry out activities even in a pandemic state ([Purnomo, Fadhlurrohman, et al., 2021](#)).

Overall, the Tangerang city government has made efforts that must be made to disseminate information discussing COVID-19, the social and economic impact of COVID-19, health protocols, healthy lifestyles, efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, efforts for economic recovery. Local and national scale and development recovery. The Tangerang city government is also active in disseminating policies to be implemented, such as Government Regulation instead of Law (Perppu) No 1/2020 concerning financial policies for handling COVID-19, Presidential Decree (Kepres) No 11/2020 concerning policies. Health emergency, Government Regulation (PP) No 21/2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB), Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights (Permenkumham) No 11/2020 concerning the prohibition of entry into the Indonesian state and Presidential Decree (Keppres) No 12/2020 regarding the Non-Natural Disaster of the COVID-19 pandemic as a national disaster.

The dissemination of information carried out by the Tangerang City government is carried out through social media such as Facebook and Twitter; this is done because of a modern lifestyle shift. The government routinely disseminates information through social media @kota_tangerang. The government also actively conducts press conferences, online and offline interviews with print or online media to disseminate the latest and updated information, disseminate policies, and efforts to recover. Overall, the Tangerang city government has successfully fulfilled the elements of information dissemination, especially policies during COVID-

19 through online media, social media, printed media such as magazines, newspapers and other circulars.

CONCLUSION

Research on the use of information for the government in disseminating programs and policies during the COVID-19 pandemic to the public is beneficial in the process of bureaucratic information disclosure and accountability to the public so that public trust in the government continues to increase. Especially in the current state of COVID-19, speed of information is needed in conveying the latest active cases at the local and national levels, recovery efforts carried out by the government and supported by community assistance and accuracy of information objectives so that information does not become fake news consumed by the public.

In the case of information delivery carried out by the Tangerang city government, related policies and implementation of these policies through online media and social media have been implemented by the elements and values of openness and accuracy. With the help of social media, Twitter is beneficial for the government; it can be seen that there are high response and participation to the tweets on the Twitter page, and many even forward messages so that the information can be widely known to the public. Like social media, online media and local print media are also the government's choice because they can provide information to people who do not have access to Twitter, so that the choices and diversity of information sources are more numerous and remain from one source, namely the government.

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